

X 4623

SECRET

17 May 1946

DECLASSIFIED AND RELEASED BY  
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
SOURCE METHOD EXEMPTION 3B2E  
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT  
DATE 2006MEMORANDUM

TO: Saint, Vienna

FROM: Saint

SUBJECT: WENDER, Erich @ Carol POPESCU

REFERENCE: Vien 1066; LVX 207. Wash 36089 OUT 0454

X-4623

1. Previous information on subject from British sources appears to corroborate points in subject's story, such as his service with Ast Vien, connection with Nemeth and Co., and the general nature of his activities.

2. Interrogation of Ander Gross, now in our files, raises some points worth discussion. According to Gross, he met Springman, whom he had known since boyhood, around October 1942, and agreed to arrange for the delivery of mail and money from Istanbul for the Zionists for a 10% commission on the money handled. The following day, Gross introduced Springman to Erich Werner, alias Charles Popescu (who is, of course, our subject) whom Gross had met recently at the races, and whom Gross had recruited as courier for Springman's mission. This directly contradicts Wender's statement that he recruited Gross to perform missions for Joint. Gross states that when Wender returned from Istanbul, he gave Gross only one-fourth of the 10% commission, rather than a half-share according to their agreement. Wender told Gross that he had met Pomerants (Wenia) and other Joints in Istanbul, but did not think they would make much money out of them.

3. In February 1943, Springman asked Gross to take another letter to Turkey. As Wender was then stuck in Istanbul as the frontier was closed to travel, Gross decided to make the journey himself. He went down to Istanbul in March, contacting Wender immediately. Wender introduced him to Pomerants, to Cellek, Baeder and Szynd, other Joints, and later to Wittold Blain, an agent of the Polish Consulate. Others to whom Wender introduced Gross were Teddy Baumann, a Hungarian newspaperman of shady reputation and probably a DA; one Bachsmann, probably Albert Bachsmann, a merchant and suspect German agent (id/w Boxmann in Para 32 of LVX 207); Vogl, and Viktor, both of the Taksim Bar and reported agents of Ast III F, Vienna; Mazaryk, probably Hasan Mazaryk, an associate of Willy Goetz, and Neufeld, a Hungarian Jew artiste. Wender also told Gross of his contact with Commander Earle, saying Earle had given him a questionnaire to fill out. All of the above from Gross indicates that Wender may have known more about GIS activities in Istanbul than he has told.

SECRET

**SECRET**

-2-

4. Further information from Gross gives the opposite impression, however, as much of Gross' story about contacts made through Collek contained no mention of Wender except to say that Gross reported to Collek that Wender was not thoroughly reliable.

5. Before Gross and Wender left Istanbul, Wender introduced Gross to David Asar, an agent of Commander Earle. On the train to Sofia, Wender showed Gross a leaden tube which he had undertaken to carry from Roman, Polish Consul in Istanbul, to a Polish editor in Budapest, named Karjibowsky, for a fee of 500 thales.

6. Gross also accuses Wender, Weininger and one Schals of having cheated Gross in the matter of his commissions on the smuggled Joint funds and of having cheated the Jews on the exchange of gold to Reichsmarks. Gross, Wender and Weininger discussed the handling of the money, and the latter arranged through his chief, Dr. Schmidt, of Ast III F, Vienna, to transport the funds. Permission from Graf Marosna, head of Gen KO, Vienna, was arranged for this through Baron Manteuffel, head of Ast IIIF, Vienna. On a second trip to Istanbul, Gross warned Collek and Pomerantz of this arrangement, and of his doubts as to the reliability of Wender and Weininger. He also warned them against introducing these two to the British.

7. On a third journey to Istanbul, Gross was introduced by Wender to Julius Kovacs or Kovats, an agent of Klatt and the Hungarians.

8. After Gross' third return to Budapest, he states that Willi Goetz admitted that he had written a report to Gross' superior, Merkey, against Gross at the instigation of Wender and Weininger, who threatened to report on Goetz if he refused.

9. Gross reports on Wender's difficulties with Bagel and subsequent arrest substantially as he gives it himself.

10. One further report mentions a Charles Popescu, a shipping agent in Turkey and Syria, as a contact of the Axis Armistice Commissions for trade in the Eastern Mediterranean. Probably identical with subject.

11. The chief points of interest here for our purpose are:

a) The likelihood that Wender has colored his story to serve his own purpose or that he has withheld information, particularly on his association with Gross. According to Gross' story, the two appear to have entertained considerable distrust of each other; this idea is encouraged somewhat by subject's suspicion that Gross had betrayed him to the Gestapo. Further, it appears from Gross' story that subject is not the idealistic Zionist he pictures himself, but was rather involved in the Zionist activity for what he could make out of it. In support of this idea are his recent black market activities; in opposition is our realization that Gross himself is a very unreliable witness, and his accusations of sharp dealing on the part of Wender may not be true.

**SECRET**

**SECRET**

-3-

b) The security of subject, as evidenced by his cheerful willingness to discuss his business with Gross (his mission for Roman, his contact with Earle, his introduction of Gross to Asar, Earle's agent) about whose activities he claims to know nothing, his betrayal of Gefrornier to the Russians (Para 45, LVX 207), and his apparent willingness to serve anybody who approached him with a mission. The statements made by Gross relative to the many introductions given him by Wender and the contacts of Wender with Roman and Earle have the ring of truth because there seems no reason for Gross to have invented such incidents; it could have helped his own case in no way.

12. You may, by further interrogation, elicit further information on some of these points. Meanwhile, there seems little doubt that subject is a typical professional agent, and no more reliable than most of that stamp. There seems little reason to assume that he could be trusted any further than his own immediate interests lie, or that he would maintain a confidence any longer than it is to his immediate profit to do so. Contact and use of subject should be predicated on this basis.

**SECRET**